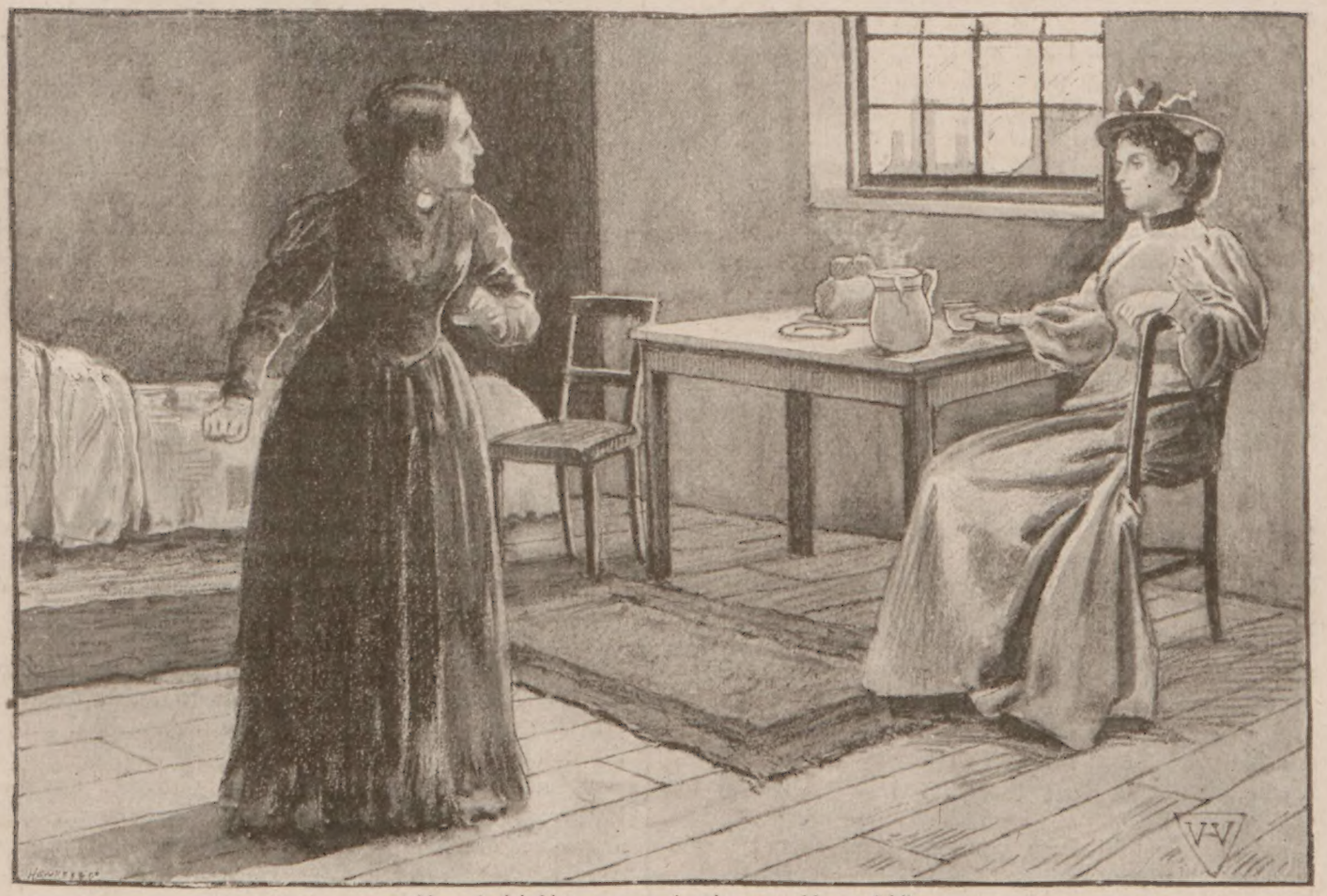
A String of Pearls.

BY ELIZA F. POLLARD, AUTHOR OF "ROGER THE RANGER," ETC.



"'You told them you had seen them?'" *p.* 130.

CHAPTER V.

SUSPICION.

ON leaving the studio in the Rue Blanche, Thirza walked slowly up the street and across the Place Pigalle. The sun was shining brightly, and the waters of the fountain in the centre of the Place glistened and danced in its rays. It was a lazily hot day, and groups of Italians—men, women, and children—were lounging round the fountain, as they are wont to do under the sunny skies of Florence or Rome. They were all artists' models, for the Place Pigalle and the streets diverging from it are full of studios, and so at mid-day artists and models alike flock to the surrounding restaurants; but many of the latter, who cannot afford such luxury as a regular meal, eat their hunch of white bread (with a bit of garlic or maybe a sausage for flavour) contentedly on the Place, the elders jabbering together, whilst the children play at "heads or tails," and roll and squabble together on the pavement. It is a picturesque sight, full of life and colour.

"Ah, there's Thirza," said a girl in a smart red skirt, blue silk apron, white bodice, and head-dress. "She'll give me a sou if I ask her, she always does, and then I'll get a 'petit pain'—they're just hot out of the oven—at the baker's round the corner;" and, suiting the action to the word, she ran after Thirza.

"A sou, Thirza," she exclaimed, "I'm so hungry."

"Always begging, Lina!" said Thirza, turning round. "It is not well."

"But if I'm hungry!" persisted the girl.

Thirza shook her head, put her hand into her pocket, and drew it out again empty.

"I have not got a sou to-day," she said.

"What a shame!" exclaimed the girl, "and you are always in work. You earn well. Why do you give it all to that old sorceress, your aunt?"

"She keeps me," answered Thirza. "Good-day, Lina; I'm sorry," and she hurried away.

"Why do I?" she muttered. "I don't think I shall much longer; I'm tired of it all," and the beautiful face clouded over, as she climbed up the steep, narrow street leading to the heights of Monmartre.

She stopped at last before a gateway, opening into a courtyard, surrounded by blocks of houses, five or six storeys high. They were let out in flats to the working classes, and were perfect hives, with a swarming population. The narrow staircases leading to each block were marked A, B, C, and so on.

Thirza crossed to letter C, ascended the narrow, unclean stairs to the very top, and knocked with her hand at the door on the right side of the landing.

A shuffling step came down the passage, and the door was opened by a very small, middle-aged woman. Her complexion was as yellow as parchment; her eyes small, black, and very piercing; her hair was also of a blue-black, arranged in flat, artificially-waved bandeaux, sticking close as if they were glued to her high, narrow forehead. She was dressed entirely in black, relieved

only by a large coral brooch at the throat and long coral ear-rings.

"Back again," she said with a scowl, when she saw Thirza. "Then he didn't want you?"

"No, and I wish I had not gone; it was an unlucky day," and, pushing past the woman, she entered a little apartment, half bed, half sitting room. On the deal table at the window were the remains of a meal. She sat down, cut a slice of bread, poured out some coffee from a cracked pot, and began slowly eating.

Her aunt, or, as she was generally called, Madame Charles, moved about the room, but kept her back carefully turned towards the girl. After a few minutes, she said—"What is unlucky? Why did Monsieur Philip not want you?"

"He had company—Mr. Harcroft's heirs—and they were all put out, what do you think about?" asked Thirza.

"How can I tell!" replied Madame Charles.

"You remember those pearls he was looking at the last time you went to the studio to ask for my money in advance, because of the rent?" said Thirza. "You saw him put them in a red case and cover them with paper, did you not?"

"I did not notice," said Madame Charles. "Why should I? They were nothing to me."

A flash of light shot from the girl's eyes.

"Well, I saw them," she said, "and I told Mr. Philip and his friends that I had done so, for the pearls have been stolen, and the paper too; it seems it was his will."

"And you told them you had seen them!" said Madame Charles, turning round upon her.

"Why not?" retorted Thirza, with a careless nod.

"I always said you were a fool," answered Madame Charles. "Did you let them know I was with you on the occasion?"

"No, I did not think it worth while," she replied. "As I was telling you, the case is there all right, but the pearls and paper are both missing. Mr. Philip is going to put the whole affair into the hands of the police."

"And you said you had seen them. You will be had up, as sure as my name is Charles," exclaimed the old woman.

"The police will come and search here first," said the girl; "they can't take me up simply because I saw the pearls; besides, if I had taken them, I should not have told, that is in my favour." All the time she was speaking she kept her eyes fixed steadily on her aunt.

"As if you need have said anything at all," grumbled Madame Charles.

"It was quite natural. I saw the red case and exclaimed, and then Monsieur Philip showed me it was empty," and Thirza drank off her cup of half-cold coffee, concluding, "I have a *séance* at two o'clock in the Boulevard Montparnasse; it is late, I must take the omnibus. Give me some money, I have none."

"You have young legs, you can walk," said her aunt, sullenly.

"I should not be in time. Give me the money, or I stay at home," answered Thirza, authoritatively. A *séance* meant five francs, and she knew her aunt would not care to lose that. But suddenly she threw her hat on the ground and said passionately, "I'm tired of the business! I've worked for you ten years, ever since mother died, and you begrudge me every penny; and now—well, now I may be taken up for a thief."

"Is that my fault?" said Madame Charles. "You are always so ready with your tongue. Do you think I want the police here?"

Thirza looked at her steadily. "I don't suppose you do," she answered. "Now give me the money," and she held out her hand.

Reluctantly Madame Charles counted out three sous.

"You'll go on the outside and walk back," she said.

Thirza's lip curled, but she answered, "Yes, only I shall be hungry before the *séance* is over—another sou for a roll."

"Most girls get cakes and bonbons given them," said her aunt, with an ugly look; "why don't you?"

"Because I don't choose," answered Thirza, and picking up her hat she left the room. She stood still for a moment in the narrow, dark passage, brushed her hand across her eyes, and muttered,

"'Unspotted from the world!' Your last words, mother. I wonder if you guessed how hard it would be!"

* * * * *

"I am fully persuaded that girl knows more about those lost pearls than she chooses to let us see," said Mr. Dobson to Philip Fleming, as they walked back to the hotel together.

"And I am certain she is perfectly honest," answered Philip. "I have known her ever since she was a girl of twelve, and she is now eighteen, and I have never caught Thirza tripping. Mr. Harcroft was very fond of her, and trusted her implicitly. He has painted her over and over again, and she was accustomed to tidy up the studio, and do all sorts of little errands for him."

"She did not seem to take his death much to heart," said Mr. Dobson.

"That is Thirza's way," answered Philip.

"I'm afraid we shall have to call her as witness," said Mr. Dobson.

"I hope not; I should be sorry to involve her in the affair," replied Philip. "You have no idea what French law is, and how, if you set the police on a scent, they will hound a person down be he guilty or innocent. It is sufficient for Thirza to have shady relations and to be only a model for them to set their fangs into her. It would ruin her. Let the girl alone at least as long as you can."

"It will be for Sir James Fleming to decide that, and I must consider my client," answered Mr. Dobson.

"I shall never regret anything so much as I do not having secured that case before Mr. Harcroft's death," said Philip.

"What good would that have done? It would only have troubled his last moments, for they must have been missing then, the theft dates further back," observed Mr. Dobson.

"Unless, as Miss Cheniston infers, he removed them himself," said Philip.

"Not likely," replied his companion.

The conversation was here broken off by Marjory joining them, with Sir James, who, though he had distinctly given it to be understood that he should

maintain his rights, was nevertheless a soft-hearted old man and was touched by the girl's evident distress at the loss of a fortune; so he had engaged her in conversation and learnt all about her and Noel, and how it was for his sake she wanted to be rich.

"I propose we should all dine together," he said, "and put off going to the magistrate till to-morrow. The night brings counsel."

So they went for a long drive through the city; then Philip took them to a little village inn outside Paris, close down by the river side, and Marjory thought she had never enjoyed anything so much before, especially going back in one of the river steamboats down the Seine. It seemed like fairyland—the many lights, the clear, soft air, and the myriads of stars, throwing out into relief the towers of Notre Dame, the gilded cupola of the Pantheon, and the slender spires and majestic outlines of churches and public buildings. She forgot about the will, she forgot everything in pure delight, as Philip pointed out to her all the objects of interest.

Worn out with excitement, she fell asleep that night, and somehow in her dreams Noel and Thirza got mixed up together; she saw them laughing and playing, and in Thirza's hair were large white pearls.

CHAPTER VI.

A FRESH OPENING.

"IT is a curious fact that people never seem to see the advantages which come naturally in their way," said Philip Fleming with a quiet smile, as he and Marjory were walking down the Champs Elysées two days later. Sir James and Mr. Dobson were engaged with the police, and Philip had undertaken to pioneer Marjory about Paris.

"What do you mean?" said Marjory. "What present advantages do I not appreciate?"

"Why, the very fact of being in Paris is an advantage to you," answered Philip. "You talk of the necessity of education, of going to Newnham or Girton, and you do not see the advantages, now you are in Paris, of remaining here and learning the language thoroughly."

"How can I? answered Marjory; "it would cost too much, and then I should be so far away from Noel."

"The last I allow," said Philip, "but in any case that will be inevitable sooner or later; and as for the first objection, I think I can do away with it entirely. I give painting lessons in a large school just outside Paris, and the directress asked me yesterday whether I happened to know of a young English girl who, in exchange for board, lodging, and French tuition, would be willing to give English lessons for a couple of hours every day. It struck me at the time what a pity you should not profit by the offer. It is a first-rate establishment, everything is carried on in style. I believe there are 150 resident pupils besides day pupils."

"And you mean to say I should have nothing to pay?" said Marjory.

"You would hold English classes for two hours daily as an equivalent," answered Philip.

Marjory was silent, considering; but for Noel she would have decided at once. To go home and face Mrs. Bradley was hourly becoming more and more distasteful; she had prophesied her failure, and unfortunately, so far, her prophecy had become true.

"I think it would be an excellent thing for you," continued Philip; "besides, I have a sort of feeling that you ought to remain in Paris on account of that will."

"What good can I do?" said Marjory. "I am not likely to find it."

"One can never tell," answered Philip. "At all events, you are more likely to find it by remaining on the spot than in that out-of-the-way Hampshire village."

"I'll think about it and speak to Mr. Dobson," said Marjory.

The result of this conversation was, that when Philip came to the hotel the following morning, Mr. Dobson met him with the words, "I think your proposition excellent. I have felt for some time that Miss Cheniston ought to have better advantages than Barston can offer her, and yet, without encroaching upon their small capital, this seemed difficult. A good Paris school would be first rate. Will you speak to the directress of the establishment? and I will bring my ward out any time agreeable to the lady, only I must be back in England the day after to-morrow."

"I hold a painting class there this afternoon," said Philip; "I think I can promise you the matter will be settled at once. Madame is very anxious to lose no time, as it is in the middle of the term."

"Very well, then; I may tell Marjory to be ready to go immediately," said Mr. Dobson.

"Certainly you may," answered Philip; "I will bring you Madame's answer this evening. I suppose you know Sir James is returning to England by the night mail?"

"Yes, we have done everything which is to be done. You must of course expect more than one domiciliary visit."

"As a matter of fact," answered Philip, laughing, "a detective was with me early this morning. You have not mentioned Thirza's story, I hope."

"No, we have not," answered Mr. Dobson; "but I believe all the models will be examined in course of time."

"That is in the natural order of events. What I wish to avoid is that particular attention should be drawn to her," said Philip, "I feel so certain of her honesty."

"If she is herself silent there is no reason why she should be annoyed more than the others," answered Mr. Dobson.

Marjory waited all that day with no little anxiety for Philip's answer. The prospect was so new to her, and she had always from her childhood upwards taken life so earnestly. The shadow of her early sorrow and the great love she bore her baby brother had prematurely ripened her character. She had never been like other girls, to whom each day brings a new joy, and who are impatient when difficulties arise. And yet the same Potter's hand had moulded them, but they had not passed through the fire; it still remained to be proved whether the clay would bear the fiery furnace and come forth perfected, or only a broken, charred mass. That same evening a note was brought her from Philip. She read it eagerly:—

"MY DEAR MISS CHENISTON,—I am sorry I cannot myself be the bearer of what I hope you will consider

good news, but an unexpected event deprives me of that pleasure. Madame Lambert, the directress of the school I spoke to you about, will be glad if you will call upon her to-morrow morning. I think you will find no difficulty in arranging matters with her, she wishes you to enter upon your duties at once. Trusting you will be satisfied,—Believe me, dear Miss Cheniston, yours faithfully, PHILIP FLEMING."

"I think it most satisfactory," said Mr. Dobson; "I will take you myself to-morrow."

"I wonder whether Noel and Sarah will think it equally so," thought Marjory, as she lay wide awake that night, thinking of what changes the morrow would bring forth. She had come to France with the prospect of being an heiress, and she was remaining in the inferior position of governess, or rather pupil teacher! But she was brave and trustful, and if a feeling of loneliness crept over her as she lay in the darkness, she remembered some sweet words she had learnt to love:

"Watch with me, Jesus, in my loneliness;
Though others say me nay, yet say Thou, yes;
Though others pass me by, stop Thou to bless."

It was a very stately room into which Mr. Dobson and Marjory were ushered on the following day. Long handsome mirrors reflected the damask satin and gilt furniture, while the floors of polished oak were almost as brilliant. Large windows, richly draped, looked out upon a vast recreation ground. Altogether it was very imposing, and poor Marjory wished herself miles away.

"I shall never do for this place," she said to Mr. Dobson.

"Nonsense," he answered, "you do not understand French flash: 'All is not gold that glitters.'"

At that moment a tall, elegantly-dressed woman entered the room. Her get-up was as perfect as her surroundings, from her elaborately-dressed hair to the stylish, well-fitting Parisian dress. A smile, which Marjory soon learnt to know was stereotyped, parted the thin, pale lips as she bowed courteously.

"Pray be seated," she said, pointing to the sofa, and herself taking an armchair. "You are, I believe, the young lady of whom Monsieur Fleming spoke," she said, turning to Marjory.

"I am Marjory Cheniston, and Mr. Fleming thought I might suit you as English governess, but I have never taught," said Marjory, bluntly.

Madame smiled. "Your daughter is very young," she said, turning to Mr. Dobson.

"Miss Cheniston is my ward," he answered. "I brought her to Paris on business. I think it would be as well if she remained and studied the French language; it may be useful to her in the future."

"Certainly," said Madame, "all knowledge is useful;" and, in a business-like manner, she explained what she expected of Marjory, and what advantages she would give her in return for her services.

"I am willing to pay a certain sum to allow of Miss Cheniston having the best masters for accomplishments, such as music and drawing," said Mr. Dobson.

"That is well," replied Madame; "for my part I engage she shall have time to study, shall attend the French classes, and benefit by the general education of the establishment, which I may truly say is unsurpassed in Paris. I yearly send up pupils for their diplomas, and they rarely fail to obtain them."

"I have no doubt that such is the case," said Mr. Dobson, "and am quite satisfied to leave Miss Cheniston under your care. I am obliged to return to England to-night; will it be convenient for you to receive her at once?"

"It will suit me admirably," answered Madame; "I am waiting for a teacher. If you like, she can remain now, and you can send her box later."

"I would rather go back to the hotel and return this afternoon," pleaded Marjory.

"Let it be so, then," said Mr. Dobson; and, rising, they took leave of Madame, who patted Marjory on the shoulder, assuring her she would be quite happy.

"Whether I am happy or not does not matter much," thought Marjory, "if only I gain knowledge to fight Noel's battles and my own."

"I am sorry, Marjory," said Mr. Dobson, coming into the room when she was packing, "but the French lawyer has come to consult me; I cannot take you back to the school, but the mistress of the hotel is a friend of Madame Lambert's and has promised to do so; she has also offered to have you out sometimes on Sundays, and I have consented; it will make a change for you, and you will see a little of Paris. Madame is a very superior person. Good-bye, my child, and take care of yourself. I have put a certain sum of money into this purse, and will send you the same amount every month. I only hope that will may be forthcoming; in the meantime you cannot do better than improve yourself." And so he took a kindly leave of Marjory.

An hour later she was driving with Madame to the Institution Lambert. She was indeed alone.

(To be continued.)

HOMEWARD BOUND.

IT has been a hot, heavy day. Even the reapers in the cornfield have complained of the heat; and it takes something more than an average summer temperature to disturb them! The meadows look scorched; and the cows, disdaining the parched grass, have been standing for the most part up to their knees in the pool, or lazily lying in the shade of the trees by the water's edge. They have almost resented the attentions of Mary, the dairy-maid, and have eyed her reproachfully when she has appeared to disturb their repose by driving them home at milking-time.

But the shadows are beginning to lengthen now, and the trees are whispering gratefully of coming coolness as a faint breeze rustles their crisp, dry leaves. The reapers, thankful that the toil of the day is over, are making their way homeward; the birds, after a last, happy flight in the evening air, are seeking their nests; the little children, tired with play, are already asleep. Mary is tired, too; and, as she drives her flock of geese through the fields to the safety of the farmyard, feels glad that she, like the rest of the world, is homeward bound. The very geese seem to waddle willingly

Homeward Bound. (*Drawn by* YEEND KING.)

on, troubled by no misgivings of the approaching season that will doubtless prove disastrous to most of them. They appear to know that they, too, are homeward bound; and that, at the present moment, is their only concern.

Home is a universal magnet that draws us all to its peace and rest. How sweet it is, after the toil of the day, to lay aside our tasks and turn our steps homeward! Whatever rebuffs, or disappointments, or unkindnesses we may have met with in the world outside, we know that once we "win home," all will be well. And so we are heartened and encouraged to toil on and hope on, joying in our earthly home, and looking ever forward to the day—how near or how distant none can tell—when, our pilgrimage ended at last, we shall gather in the Father's home above, and be no longer "homeward bound," but AT HOME.

M.

CONCERNING THE CARE OF HOUSE-PLANTS.

BY AMY S. WOODS.

O general has become the use of pot-plants and ferns for the adornment of our tables and the decoration of our rooms, that I feel no apology is needed for offering these few suggestions as to the best means to be adopted for ensuring their healthy growth.

It is often a matter of surprise to dwellers in towns to see the flourishing condition of the plants in the windows and houses of country or suburban cottages.

How they grow! and how they seem to enjoy their close quarters—crowded close together—leaf touching leaf—branch elbowing branch—as they stretch towards the light; and yet every plant a mass of bloom, every blossom beautiful in the strength of vigorous growth. How different from the shrivelling palms and dwindling yellow ferns we see in many drawing-rooms!—plants whose whole appearance points to the fact that they are attended to "promiscuous-like." Left one week till the soil within their pots is dry as desert-sand—drowned in cold hard water the next—exposed in turn to draughts, excessive heat, and gas—and yet they live—after a fashion. All credit to them for doing so!

When lunching with a friend a few weeks ago, my attention was drawn to some small palms in silver pots which graced the table, and I ventured to remark that they looked as if a luke-warm bath would improve their appearance.

"How often do you water them?" I asked.

"Oh! I don't know," was the careless rejoinder—"when I happen to think of them; sometimes I give them some once a week, and sometimes I forget all about it."

"And how long do they live?"

"Generally about six weeks, and then I pull them up and buy some more; they are only sixpence or eightpence each."

"Well, you don't get much enjoyment out of *your* plants!" I rejoined, rather snappishly I am afraid. "I always look upon them rather in the light of children—needing to be fed and tended with unvarying regularity—and flourishing better the better you treat them."

It has been said that plants grow best under the care of those who love them, and though the idea sounds rather far fetched, I am inclined to think there is some truth in it.

I remember visiting an old woman, the window of whose tiny room was all ablaze with flowers—pelargoniums and geraniums, calceolarias and creeping jenny—a display any gardener might have been proud of. I admired the flowers, and expressed surprise that they bloomed so well in such a cramped and crowded space.

"Well, you see, Miss," said the owner proudly, "I'm always here to look after them, an' I talks to them, an' I *loves* them, an' that's how they come to do so well!"

Surely this devotion to her plant-children was almost on a par with that of an old man living a stone's-throw from my own home, who, during the severe frost of 1895, gave up one of his scanty blankets to lay over his beloved flowers at night!

But now let us turn our attention to the more practical part of the subject; and first of all we will have a short chat about ferns, which are perhaps the most general house-plants, and which divide themselves naturally into two classes—hardy and otherwise, the latter of course requiring a more regular temperature and greater care than their hardy brethren.

Any gardener or the florist of whom you buy your ferns will tell you to which class yours belong, if you should not yourself be quite clear with regard to the species, and will also tell you if they require any special treatment.

We will look at the hardy sorts first, including under that heading all varieties of outdoor ferns, as well as those more tender kinds which will flourish in any temperature higher than 32° Fahr.

Naturally the first question to be considered is that of a suitable soil, and the best mixture you can use is one composed of peat, leaf-mould, and one part of silver sand. Be careful to see that there is plenty of drainage at the bottom of the pot, and that the pot itself is clean and dry. Should any moss or vegetable mould collect outside any flower pots it should be removed, as its growth prevents the pot from being porous and admitting air to the roots. For the same reason do not let your common flower pots fit too tightly into the china ones which conceal them, but allow an air space to remain between.

The same potting compost may be used for the more delicate varieties of ferns, slightly increasing the percentage of sand and adding a little powdered charcoal if you can get it.

With regard to watering the ferns, your own judgment will be the best guide. For my own part I make a rule of watering them thoroughly, with a watering can with the rose on, once a week in winter and twice a week in summer, giving them a little water between times if they need it. In summer they will probably require it every alternate day, or oftener if they stand in a hot place; in winter it is a safe plan never to water them unless the soil in the pot is too dry to adhere to the finger. A little moss on the top of the pots is a great help towards keeping the soil moist, and also for counteracting the injurious effect which the hot, dry air of our sitting-rooms has upon plant-life. Always use chilled rain water, and always give *sufficient*—a mere sprinkling only irritates the roots, without nourishing them. After watering your plants in the room where they stand, lift the pots from the china ones and pour out any water that may have drained into them, drying them with a cloth before replacing the flower-pot.

At the weekly watering it is a good plan to place each pot in a tub or pail of chilled water—if high enough to cover the plant also, all the better—and allow it to remain there until the air in the soil has ceased to bubble up to the top of the water. By this means the soil

becomes uniformly damp, and absorbs more moisture than it can do when merely watered from a can. The more delicate ferns may be tubbed in just the same way, but the water for them must be at least 60° or 65°, and great care must be taken that the ferns are not allowed to stand in a draught when set to drain.

Draughts are a *bête noir* to all delicate plants, especially to maiden-hair ferns, whose young fronds are quickly shrivelled by a current of cold air.

These graceful ferns require an even temperature of from 55° to 65° or 70°, never *lower*, especially at night.

Moist heat is the atmosphere in which they thrive best, and to grow them to perfection it is best to keep them in a room only a week at a time, and then return them to the moist warm air of a greenhouse or fernery. As, however, we are not all the happy possessors of greenhouses, we cannot adopt this course of treatment; but much may be done to cultivate a healthy growth in maiden-hairs by attention to temperature, removal from the noxious effects of gas, and by allowing them constant moisture and COLD TEA. Yes; big letters please, printer! so that there may be no mistake about its merits, for no better tonic for ferns exists.

Follow the example of the Cambridge men, and empty the contents of your tea-pots, when cool enough, into your fern-pots, and your maiden-hairs will make your friends green with envy! All ferns like the application, but maiden-hair ferns are perhaps the most inveterate tea-drinkers. All small ferns, such as those used for table decorations, thrive best when moss is placed about them, and they too should be immersed bodily in luke-warm water once a week.

I have been told that it is impossible to keep ferns alive in the small china or metal pots which have no hole for drainage, and which are too small to have a common flower-pot set inside them. During the past year, therefore, I have been testing the truth of this statement, and have proved that it is possible not only to keep the ferns *alive*, but to make them grow to double their size.

The secret of this success is, I believe, owing to the plan of always turning the pots—after watering or soaking them—as nearly upside down as it is possible to do without injuring the ferns, and when the water has drained from the bottom of the pots, squeezing the soil with the fingers round the roots of the ferns, so that the water runs out and does not settle in a perpetual puddle at the bottom of the pots.

Ferns planted in the Japanese pots with pierced sides—in which, by the way, they flourish to perfection—require to be laid on their side for draining, and then to have the superfluous water squeezed out in the way I have mentioned.

Always remove any dead or dying fronds from your ferns, as they tend to weaken the plants, besides giving them a shabby appearance; and if your maiden-hairs or other delicate ferns should, in spite of all your care, look brown in the early springtime, re-pot them and then cut them down, and as summer comes on a fresh growth of delicate fronds will spring up to delight your eye.

(*To be continued.*)

THE WICKED WORLD.

I'VE had my sorrow, I've had my bliss;
I've made successes, I've met defeats;
And my experience comes to this—
To balance bitters, you'll find the sweets;
And in spite of the blame against it hurled,
It's not so bad, is this wicked world.

We have our hobbies—aye, one and all;
And hobbies are skittish beasts at best,
And not sure-footed—they're apt to fall
At the very first hedge, if too hardly prest.
But, prythee, friend, should it chance you're purled,
Don't lay all the blame on the wicked world.

If you've loved a maiden with golden locks,
And learn too late they take on and off,
Don't preach, like old Æsop's fabled fox,
That female beauty is all a scoff:
There are many, be sure, of "the darlings curled"
Who wear their own hair, in this wicked world.

If ever a friend you have trusted long
Should fail on trial, and prove untrue,
Don't think all friendship is false and wrong,
But closer cling to the faithful few;
Nor against mankind be your flag unfurled,
There are loyal hearts in this wicked world.

Through light and darkness, through shade and shine,
This orb in its fated circle rolls;
Its path was fixed by a Hand Divine,
As paths are meted for human souls.
Not at random, as balls are at billiards twirled,
Revolves on its axis this wicked world.

Then bear your punishment well and smile;
You'll have to suffer, but don't despond;
For after all it is but for a while,
Till we lift the curtain and pass beyond!
Though dark the waves that are round you swirled,
There's a better to follow this wicked world.

Her Hat-pin.—I overheard the following conversation the other day in a popular refreshment-room:—

"Do your children mind you?"

"Not a bit; they pay no more attention to me than if I were a dummy. It takes their father to bring them to their senses."

"I am so glad to hear it; I like to know that somebody else besides me has a hard time with their children. I declare, the only way I can get baby to mind, already, is to jab him with a hat-pin."

I waited to hear no more. With sad precipitation I picked up my bag and fled. Had I waited another minute I should have said to that mother: "Madame, I will give you a problem to solve: If at the age of three a child needs the impetus of a hair-pin to make him obey, how many meat-axes will it require to keep him in order at the age of ten? And if you are such a poor miserable failure as a mother and woman now, what have the eternities in store for you?" M. G. H.

* * * *

The Three R's.—The education of Iceland is entirely domestic. There is no public school in the country. The laws and customs of the land merely require that the parents or guardians, under direction of the parish pastor, shall teach the children reading, writing, and arithmetic.

A MOTHER INDEED.

A VISIT TO MRS. GINEVER'S ORPHANAGE.

BY JENNIE CHAPPELL, AUTHOR OF "BY THE WAY OF THE VALLEY," ETC.

The Sewing Class.

IN a pleasant home in the west end of London there lived, between fifty and sixty years ago, a sunny-faced little girl, whose favourite game was playing at a make-believe orphanage. She had been taken on several occasions by her father to a Sunday morning service at a home for orphan girls; and this simple experience proved to be the seed, which falling, all unknown to any but the Divine Husbandman, into the ready ground of a sympathetic and loving nature, is to-day bearing its hundredfold of blessed fruit.

Little Phœbe Hammond's childish imagination became imbued with the fascinating idea of an orphan home, with "a lovely garden and lawn, made bright by the joy of the orphans, who were to be always happy, prettily dressed, and much loved." From almost babyhood, when her dollies were all poor children for whom she tenderly cared, on through her own girlhood and governess-ship, her all too brief wedded happiness, and subsequent experiences as assistant in various institutions for destitute little ones, the subject of our sketch was being prepared by Him who knew her capabilities to the uttermost, for the work He had designed for her to do.

It was in 1874 that Mrs. Phœbe Ginever took into her own small home, at 23, Kingsdown Road, Holloway, N., and began to mother, two little orphan girls. She prepared a bedroom with six little beds in it, and in a few weeks each bed had an occupant. Three months later came an urgent appeal on behalf of a child bereft of both parents. There was no more room in the orphans' chamber, so Mrs. Ginever took the little lone one into her own bed. By Christmas of that year a second room had been furnished, and thirteen children gathered in.

In the course of the next few months eight more orphans were admitted, and applications increased so rapidly that it seemed imperative that larger accommodation should be secured. A suitable house was found in a neighbouring road, but Mrs. Ginever was in great perplexity as to the wisdom of taking it, for she would thus be nearly doubling her expenses.

From girlhood she had been one of those who most firmly believe that

> "More things are wrought by prayer
> Than this world dreams of;"

and the way in which she sought and obtained guidance in her present difficulty may serve as a sample of the spirit, so marvellously owned and blessed by God, in which all her labour for the children was carried on. She laid the whole matter before the Lord, and as prompt decision was necessary, begged Him to send some token that very day if it should be His will that the orphans were to remove; she told Him that if He should incline some new friend to come to them with help, she would take it as a sign that she was to extend the work.

The whole day passed, and no one called, so at night Mrs. Ginever concluded that they were to remain where they were, and she then asked God to incline the heart of some one else to open a home for those orphans for whom she had no room. Almost immediately, in answer doubtless to her prayer, the thought came that it might possibly be that the Lord had moved the heart of some new *country* friend, who could not communicate with them on the one day she had fixed; and so vivid became this idea that next morning she actually told the child who answered the door to look out for the postman, as she expected an important letter.

It came: from an anonymous stranger at Cambridge, asking information about the work, and *especially wishing to know if they had any intention of increasing it.* An answer in the affirmative

Little Learners.

A Hard Sum.

brought a most encouraging reply and a five-pound note.

So the orphans and their "mother" removed into Manor Road, and a little later on a second Home was opened at 8, Tremlett Grove, N. The whole record of the twenty years of beautiful work which this servant of God accomplished before she was, early in 1894, called home to her rest, scintillates with marvellous gems of modern miracle. It was indeed done unto Phœbe Ginever "according to her faith," and that was great. Every need, large or small, was laid before the Lord, and nothing was unheeded or unsupplied by Him.

It is strange to read, for instance, how the want of a large dining-table, mentioned to no human ear, was promptly met by a friend, who had had an impression on his mind all day that such an article was required! Food, clothing, money, supplies of all kinds were sent as if by angel hands when the need was sorest, and wonderful messages of comfort and encouragement came by letter and post-card, in times of perplexity of which even the writers in some instances knew nothing.

Later on, a Home for crippled and afflicted children was opened at Broadstairs, which proves invaluable also as a convalescent and holiday home for ailing little ones from the London flock; and from Manor Road the large little family was once again removed to its present commodious quarters at 18 and 19, Pemberton Road, Holloway.

It is now more than two years since this "mother dear" of the orphans was called away, leaving behind her a family of nearly 200 children of all ages, down to a bonny, dark-eyed little fellow of only four months old, to be cared for by their heavenly Father through His representatives on earth.

The Kingsdown Orphanage, as from the first it has been called, savours little of the cold formality of old-time "institutions." The children wear no uniform, which is a home-like as well as an economical arrangement, and gifts of clothing, old or new, as well as material of all kinds, are gladly welcomed and infallibly useful. They do not walk out, Noah's Ark fashion, two and two (except when *en masse*, when such a procession is necessary), but may often be seen in Holloway Road, trotting along in cosy groups of five or six, laughing and talking and looking in at the shop-windows.

Although the children at the Tremlett Grove Home are, as a rule, smaller than those at Pemberton Road, yet tiny ones are also taken to live with the bigger children, to be loved and tended by them. Thus the elder girls obtain much practical knowledge as to the care and management of babies, and the complaint can never be made against Mrs. Ginever's Homes, as against some asylums, that the girl inmates when they go out to service are "no use with children," because they "know nothing about them."

The junior helpers at Tremlett Grove are also all of them young people who have been brought up and trained in the Homes, and the bright faces and chubby limbs of the little tots under their care (of whom there were at one time no less than eighteen under three years old) testify to their good treatment. The loving confidence, moreover, with which one wee girl held up her arms to be lifted into our lap, and the cosy way in

Preparing for Bed.

which she snuggled down, testified that real, motherly caresses are not unfamiliar to these happy little ones.

All the bigger boys (who are kept in the Homes until ten years old) and many of the girls and infants daily attend a neighbouring Board School, which plan adds greatly to the naturalness and healthfulness of their lives, while helping to widen the circle of interest in the Orphanage. But, indeed, "Mrs. Ginever's children" have always held a warm place in the affections of their neighbours, and the evidences of the love of their friends will not, we trust, slacken now that they are doubly orphaned by the death of their dear, adopted mother. An extract or two from the list of gifts lately acknowledged will indicate the heterogeneous character of the kindly remembrances received at the Homes, and show that no offering whatever comes amiss to the grateful recipients :—Two frocks, sixty new sixpences, twenty-eight rabbits, sausages, thirty ties, a cake, left-off clothing, bread, mugs, haricot beans, rhubarb and sugar, chemicals, 8 lbs. of meat, a load of wood, four barley puddings, etc., etc.

The orphans, who are admitted simply on the merits of each case and without delay or voting, are mostly children of respectable, and in many cases Christian parentage. The training which the girls receive in cooking, cleaning, and domestic work of all kinds, cannot fail to admirably prepare them for useful service hereafter; while the boys, though the period of their residence in the Homes is shorter, generally distinguish themselves by diligence at school and give satisfaction to those who find employment for them in after life.

THE HYMNS SHE SANG.

BY EMILY G. WETHERBEE.

HUSHED are those lips, dear Mother's song is ended!
The singer sleeps at last;
While I sit gazing at her arm-chair vacant,
And think of days long past.

The room still echoes with the old-time music,
As, singing soft and low
Those grand, sweet hymns, the Christian's consolation,
She rocks her to and fro,—

Some that can stir the heart like shouts of triumph
Or loud-toned trumpet's call,
Bidding the people *prostrate fall before Him,*
"*And crown Him—Lord of all.*"

And tender notes, filled with melodious rapture,
That leaned upon His word,
Rose in those strains of solemn, deep affection,
"*I love Thy kingdom, Lord.*"

Safe hidden in the wondrous "*Rock of Ages,*"
She bade farewell to fear;
Sure that her Lord would always gently lead her,
She read her title clear.

Joyful she saw "*from Greenland's icy mountains*"
The Gospel flag unfurled;
And knew by faith "*the morning light was breaking*"
Over a sinful world.

"*There is a fountain,*"—how the tones triumphant
Rose in victorious strains!—
"Filled with that precious blood, for all the ransomed,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins."

Dear saint, in heavenly mansions long since folded,
Safe in God's fostering love,
She joins with rapture in the blissful chorus
Of those bright choirs above.

There, where no tears are known, no pain nor sorrow,
Safe beyond Jordan's roll,
She lives for ever with her blessed Jesus,
The Lover of her soul.

A MOTHER'S PRAYERS.

BY SUSAN TEALL PERRY.

HARRY HAWKINS was going home. Home to him was a cheerless bedroom in a cheap city lodging-house.

"You'll be there at eight o'clock sharp, old fellow," his companion said to him as they stepped off from the tramcar.

"I'll be there, sharp and sure, Phil."

The young men parted at the corner. Harry ate his dinner hastily, and went up to his room to make some change in his dress. As he came downstairs he chanced to turn at the second-story landing and saw the door of a room standing ajar, and kneeling at a young mother's knee was a little child in its white night-robe. Harry caught some of the words of the "Now I lay me down to sleep" prayer, which the little one was saying.

A train of sweet memories rushed through the young man's mind at the sight of that beautiful picture. He thought of the home of his boyhood, and the face of his loving mother came up before him. He seemed to feel the gentle pressure of her hand upon his head as he felt it in the days of childhood when he too knelt at a mother's knee and repeated that same prayer. A tear came into his eye.

"Unpardonable weakness!" he exclaimed to himself as he rushed down the stairway out into the street.

Still a thought of those days would linger, and he acknowledged to himself that he had not followed the teachings of that good mother. But it was so much warmer, and lighter, and livelier down at "Burke's" than it was in the lodging-house. How could he be expected to stay at home in that cheerless place after his day's work?

"I wonder if things are all right at home, I haven't written to mother for five weeks. I suppose she is fretting over it, and has imagined all sorts of dreadful things about me," were his thoughts as he turned the corner where the glittering lights over the door of "Burke's" met his vision.

Harry Hawkins had had a letter that day from his mother. In it she had begged him to write oftener, and had told him how anxious she was about him, and this sentence in particular came to his mind: "My dear boy, I pray for you many times a day."

"Halloa, Harry!" exclaimed a voice, and Harry turned to see his companion of an hour before standing by him. "Here you are, then," and with these words he put his arm in Harry's and started for "Burke's."

"Somehow, Phil, I don't feel like myself. I think I won't join you to-night. Had a letter to-day that's bothering me."

"Oh, a love-letter, I suppose! Has your sweetheart turned you off to the mercies of the cold world, or what, old fellow? You'll feel better when we get to Burke's. Come along."

"I did have a love-letter, Phil, but not the kind you mean. It is from my mother. She's bothering herself about me because I don't write. I'm not worth it. I'm not what she thinks I am by a good deal. She prays for me What do you think of that?"

"Shows there's nothing in prayers and that sort of thing, Harry. I never had any mother to worry over me—she died when I was born. I've often thought I'd have been better if I'd had a mother; but, as it is, there is no one to care. I've gone so far now it is of no use for me to try to turn round. But come on, the others are waiting."

"I don't think I will go to-night, Phil."

"Well, Harry, if I had a mother I might turn from my evil ways; but as it is, good-bye! I'll say you are not coming."

Harry walked away. There was no bright prospect before him in the thought of his cheerless bedroom, without a friend to chat with. As he began to regret his decision, voices singing "What a friend we have in Jesus" fell upon his ear.

The sound was just above him, and as he looked up towards the window a friendly hand was laid on his shoulder and a young man said,

"Will you come to our meeting?"

Harry went in. He was a stranger, but soon Christian helpers came round him. They were true friends, and when he left the room he knew that the turning-point in his life had come. Before he went to sleep that night he wrote a letter to his mother, and when she received it she said, "I knew the Lord would hear my prayers and save my boy."

It had been that mother's custom after the supper hour to go to her room and pray for her absent boy. The mother's bedroom in that far-away farmhouse had been a hallowed place during all the years of her motherhood.

Harry is doing all he can to bring his former companions out of the old evil life into the higher and better one. He has also asked his mother to remember motherless Phil every day at the throne of the Lord who is mighty to save.

NOVEL NOTIONS.

AN ADJUSTABLE PICTURE HANGER.

THE other day we were startled by hearing an ominous crash in a distant room, and on going to discover what had happened we found that a large picture had fallen to the ground. It had been suspended with wire, which had broken by the weight, and hence the mishap. Now, here is a durable and safe picture-hanger, which will recommend itself. It is made of brass, in eleven sizes, from six to thirty-six inches in length, and still longer ones can be made by using a union joint. More than one picture can be hung on the same rod by sliding hooks like that shown at S in the figure. Two hangers are preferable for each picture, unless it is very small, as they divide the weight. The hanger is adjustable to any length, and can be brought to a level by a turn of the screw while in its place.

CHINESE NOTIONS.

When a Chinese girl is married, her attendants are always the oldest and ugliest women to be found in the neighbourhood, who are paid to act as foils to her beauty. It is said that some exceptionally ugly old women make their living by acting as professional attendants at weddings. Chinamen, when they refer to their wives—which is as seldom as possible—speak of them as "My dull thorn," or "The thorn in my ribs," or "The mean one of the inner room." Children similarly are styled "insects" or "worms," much as we say "chicks" or "cubs."

COOKING EGGS.

The "Premier Egg Cup" is the name given to a novelty in cooking utensils. The article is made of porcelain, in size rather larger than the cups generally used, and is fitted with a nickel cover. The egg to be cooked is first broken into the cup, any seasoning required is added, and after screwing on the nickel cover, the cup is plunged into the saucepan. In a minute or two longer than by the old-fashioned method the egg is "done," and may be served in the cup. Bad eggs may be at once detected before cooking, the untidiness of chipped shells is avoided, while the eggs cooked by the "Premier" are said to be more digestible than when boiled in the ordinary way.

*** Readers desiring further information concerning the Adjustable Picture Hanger illustrated above, are invited to write to the Editor at 9, Paternoster Row, London, E.C., enclosing a stamped envelope for reply.

A NEW MAGAZINE.

FOR the long period of forty-five years there has issued month by month from the house of Messrs. S. W. Partridge and Co. an uninterrupted stream of popular periodical literature, which, according to independent testimony, has done much to uplift, and enlighten, and purify the lives of English people. This quiet flow of pure literature has gone steadily on year after year, ever increasing in volume and widening in influence, until to-day "Partridge's magazines" are known and valued in homes all over the world.

The publishers of these magazines now propose to add yet one other to their already long list of periodicals for the people; and they confidently appeal to those who have noted and approved of their past efforts to support them in their new enterprise. The coming magazine, which will be known as THE OSBORNE, will contain forty-eight pages, and will be published at threepence. Messrs. Partridge intend to make it the very best magazine of general literature obtainable for so small a sum; and as a means to this end they have secured the services of some of the foremost artists and authors of the day. THE OSBORNE will be essentially a *family* magazine. The tastes of every member of the home circle will be catered for within its covers; and the mother of the family in particular will find that she has not been forgotten, arrangements having been made for a special page to be devoted to her interests exclusively in each number of the magazine. It is perhaps unnecessary to add that THE OSBORNE will contain nothing that is not of a thoroughly healthy tendency.

It is impossible at present to give a complete list of the various articles and stories that will appear in the first number of the magazine, which will be published on the 23rd of next month; but as an indication of its wide scope and general interest it may be mentioned that amongst the contents will be the first part of an entirely new and original story by S. R. CROCKETT; an exceedingly interesting article on the social influence of Her Majesty the Queen, by LADY JEUNE; a complete story by JOHN STRANGE WINTER; a charming original sketch of MARIE CORELLI; a brief, bright paper for Sunday reading by ALEXANDER MACLAREN, D.D.; the first of a series of "True Stories of Peril and Heroism," by A. E. BONSER; a delightful article on "Animal Curiosity," by A. H. JAPP, LL.D.; "The Story of Berkeley Castle," by ELIZABETH HODGES; "Woman's World," by ESTELLE; "Sports and Pastimes," by JAMES STRANG; "The Children's Corner," by the EDITOR of *The Children's Friend*; "A Chat about Books," by JESSE PAGE; "Odds and Ends of Wit and Wisdom," etc.

But, after all, a mere list of titles conveys very little. THE OSBORNE must be seen to be appreciated; and it surely is not too much to ask that every reader of *The Mothers' Companion* will favour Messrs. Partridge and Co. by expending threepence in the purchase of a copy of the first number of THE OSBORNE, in order to be able to form an independent judgment of its merits. Number One will be ready on October 23rd; and, as a very large demand is expected for it, the public are requested to give their orders to local booksellers at least a week before the date of publication.

MY LADY'S PROMISE.

BY M. B. MANWELL, AUTHOR OF "NOBLY PLANNED," ETC., ETC.

IT was in the golden September weather. Nature, at her richest, was gathering in the fruits of the bud and the blossom. In the lavish plenty that reigned, who could remember the stint of the past or the timorous doubts of the future? "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Something of this assured feeling reigned in the heart of Lady Clavering, the young widow whom the old squire, the late Sir John, had left behind him to watch over his property until the wandering, lost heir should, if found, be reinstated. She sat, the sunset's glow bathing her with rosy light, in her boudoir, stitching half-lazily at some art-embroidery, every stitch set in to the tune of wandering thoughts.

When Sir John lay dying, his young wife had given him a promise that she would spare no efforts to find the ne'er-do-well, the real heir, who had been turned out of heart and home by the incensed squire. This heir was the son of a distant cousin, and the childless widower had educated young Tom Clavering to succeed himself in the estates which were not entailed—the title was young Tom's just right. But the lad had elected to say, "Evil be thou my good." From bad to worse went he. Then young Tom was submerged, and in time Sir John married again. He had now been dead almost three years, and his widow still reigned alone at the old Hall. Her promise had been, so far, kept rigidly; every possible agency had been set to work, but failed to trace the lost heir.

If Tom could not be found before the expiration of the three years, the property was willed to the widow herself. And, as she sat crooning a murmurous song, her needle going in and out, while she waited for the dinner-bell to ring, Lady Clavering told herself that soon the fair lands stretching out in the sunset would be her very own.

It was a spell of unusual heat, and through the open window overlooking the fruitful fields came the cheery shouts of the harvest-folk departing home. Presently, in the far distance, her ladyship's long sight picked out the figure of the groom whose duty it was to go over to the post-town every evening, rain or shine, for the Old Hall letters. In the squire's time there was only one post in the day, but my lady had altered that. In these hurrying times to live on but one post a day was starvation fare.

"I wonder if he brings anything special?" mused Lady Clavering, as she watched the lad skirt round the field to reach the drive. Somehow, there was always a

"She sat in the sunset's glow." *p.* 140.

little tremor about the Old Hall's mistress just at post-time, especially of late. "Once past the three years it will be different," she thought. "There will be nothing to dread. Yes, in another month I'll be secure."

"Oh, what a number!" she exclaimed aloud, as the old butler held before her a salver with a pile of letters. Then she sat wondering which to open first.

"I've seen *that* handwriting before, surely," she said slowly, as she fingered one letter. Then a dull red flush crept up to her brow, and she suddenly sat up quite straight. In the late squire's desk was a parcel of letters tied up, in that same peculiar writing. They were docketed and labelled "Tom's letters," and were all of one pattern—hurried, blurred appeals for money.

The dinner-bell rang out unheeded while the mistress of the house sat on in the gloaming, staring wide-eyed at the letter on her lap.

"Something's happened!" whispered the household. Something had assuredly happened.

"In another month I should have been secure!" Lady Clavering's white lips murmured, as she crept away to her room dinnerless. Locking herself in, she fought a big fight—with herself.

The letter that her fingers still tightly clutched came from its writer's death-bed. Tom Clavering had all these years been sinking to the lowest depths. He had sinned in the sight of God and man deeply, so deeply that his soul was drowned in despair. But God did not forget him, if he forgot himself. A good, simple heart, a woman of the people, took pity on him and married him. Buoyed up by her struggles, Tom made an effort to get on his feet. But his marching orders had come.

In the sodden life he had lived, half his time stupefied with drink, he had completely lost touch with the world. Never opening a newspaper, he was in densest ignorance of the change in his own position by the squire's death. At length a sudden calamity, his wife's death, broke down Tom's last shred of obstinate pride. He wrote, not to Sir John, who had cast him out, but to Lady Clavering, saying that his own days were numbered, and that his little child would soon be fatherless as well as motherless. This letter it was that had changed all the world to her ladyship. A mighty temptation shook her being to its centre. Should she delay taking notice of this letter for a time—Tom's days were numbered—in order that the month, which would make her the actual mistress of the Hall's broad acres, might elapse? That night's fierce battle left its marks on Lady Clavering's comely face. She was haggard and silent, next morning, as her carriage drove her away to the railway station, for her ladyship was going to make an unexpected visit to London.

* * * * *

A dingy, unsavoury room in a London slum. On the floor a shabbily-clad child, a boy with round blue eyes, crouched playing with sticks of firewood for toys. Confronting him stood a richly-dressed woman, with an awestruck, white face, for she had just come out of the darkened inner room of which death was the new tenant. As the childless woman and the orphan child stared fixedly into each other's face, there surged through the woman's brain the words: "Whosoever shall receive one of such children in My name receiveth Me."

"Will you come home with me, little one?" she asked softly at last; and the boy, scrambling to his feet, put his chubby hand confidingly in hers. Thus was a life-compact made, a terrible temptation frustrated.

* * * * *

To-day, Lady Clavering is a happy woman. The boy-heir of the old Hall who scampers up to her, with the precious name of "mother" on his lips, is as dear to her as a son of her own would have been. No one but herself—and God—knows how nearly she had forfeited the happiness and the peace of conscience she now enjoys. And each time she remembers, with a shudder, that conflict, she thanks her Father in heaven who delivered her from temptation, and aided her to keep her promise.

NOT ONE TO SPARE.

WHICH shall it be? Which shall it be?"
I looked at John, John looked at me
(Dear, patient John, who loves me yet
As well as though my locks were jet);

And when I found that I must speak,
My voice seemed strangely low and weak;
"Tell me again what Robert said."
And then I, listening, bent my head.

"This is his letter: 'I will give
A house and land while you shall live,
If, in return, from out your seven
One child to me for aye is given.'"

I looked at John's old garments worn,
And thought of all that he had borne,
Of poverty and work and care,
Which I, though willing, could not bear.

I thought of seven mouths to feed,
Of seven little children's need,
And then of this. "Come, John," said I,
"We'll choose among them as they lie

Asleep." So, walking hand in hand,
Dear John and I surveyed our band;
First to the cradle lightly stepp'd,
Where Lilian, the baby, slept.

Softly the father stooped to lay
His rough hand down in gentle way,
When dream or whisper made her stir,
And huskily he said, "Not her!"

We stopped beside the trundle bed,
And one long ray of lamplight shed
Across the boyish, sweet face there,
In sleep so pitiful and fair;

I saw on Jamie's rough, red cheek
A tear undried. Ere John could speak,
"He's but a baby, too," said I,
And kissed him as we hurried by.

Pale, patient Robbie's angel face,
Still in his sleep bore suffering's trace;
"No, for a thousand pounds, not him!"
He whispered, while our eyes were dim.

Then John bent low o'er Bessie's bed;
And, as he kissed the golden head,
"Dear wife," he said, "we cannot spare
Our little Bess, so sweet and fair."

Poor Dick! bad Dick! our wayward son,
Turbulent, reckless, idle one—
Could he be spared? Nay; He who gave
Bid us befriend him to his grave.

Only a mother's heart can be
Patient enough for such as he;
"And so," said John, "I would not dare
To send him from her bedside prayer."

Then stole we softly up above
And knelt by Mary, child of love.
"Perhaps for her 'twould better be,"
I said to John. Quite silently

He lifted up a curl that lay
Across her cheek in wilful way,
And shook his head: "Nay, love, not thee,"
The while my heart beat audibly.

Only one more, our eldest lad,
Trusty and truthful, good and glad—
So like his father. "No, John, no—
I cannot, will not, let him go."

And so we wrote in courteous way,
We would not drive one child away;
And afterward toil lighter seemed,
Thinking of that of which we'd dreamed,

Happy, in truth, that not one face
Was missed from its accustomed place;
Thankful to work for all the seven,
Trusting the rest to One in heaven.

Cambodian Children are docile, obedient, quiet in their sports, and very respectful to their parents. They are never seen presenting anything to their father with one hand, negligently or hurriedly; but well-brought-up children, observing well the old customs, offer the object requested with both hands, gracefully bowing. They do not eat with their father unless he invites them, but with their mother and her woman, in whose charge they are.

MOTHERS IN COUNCIL.

CONDUCTED BY MRS. E. M. WATERWORTH, AUTHOR OF "MOTHERS AT HOME," ETC.

September 1st, 1896.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—What do I think of beef-tea? Well, "MARIA," as a stimulant or pick-me-up, beef-tea, meat jelly, and other members of that family are good and useful; but when you have charge of an invalid, whether young or old, remember that nothing can really take the place of milk. If you can get your invalid to take only a pint of milk in the twenty-four hours, he will thrive more than if he took two quarts of beef-tea without the milk. If the milk seems to disagree, try it in tiny quantities, with a little lime-water and a pinch of salt. In the feeding of young and delicate people, milk should be the foundation, beef-tea and such-like the ornamentation.

* * * *

"PURBLIND," I should not advise you to consult an optician. You might just as well ask a farrier to make your shoes. If you can afford it, go to a good oculist, the one whose address I gave you is first-rate. If money is scarce, go to a hospital. You will then learn exactly what is wrong with your eyes, and what medicine, in the shape of glasses, they require. It is one of the many wonders of everyday life, that while people rush to doctors for many trivial complaints which they could cure themselves, they do so often let the most delicate organ of their body be tinkered by any one who can make a pair of spectacles. Remember, all of you, and "PURBLIND" in particular, that by using the wrong glasses you will be, perhaps, increasing the mischief you want to remedy.

* * * *

OUR PUZZLE PARAGRAPH.

"JESSIE" wrote to me, some time back: "My sister has been asked to marry a man who divorced his wife six years ago. The woman is still alive. Ought my sister to accept him or not?"

As you will see by referring to last month's magazine, I declined to answer the question myself in these columns. What I might have done if she had enclosed her address is quite another thing; but I should like to hear the opinion of my Mothers' Council on the matter.

A book valued at half-a-crown will be sent to the writers of the two best answers. Please note that in this case I speak in the plural number. I am pretty sure to get some letters in favour of the marriage and some entirely against it, both sides having, probably, equally good reason in them. So we propose to give a prize to the best argument on each side, and print those arguments too. The Speaker of the House is bound to be impartial, you know; and I only admit the question because I consider it is a problem which may possibly come to any mother who has grown-up children.

* * * *

Our June puzzle was evidently very popular, and it was a difficult matter to fix upon the best out of a number of first-rate answers. The majority of my readers evidently think that "ALICE" ought to break off the engagement. Only one or two seem to me to have grasped the fact that "ALICE" had behaved weakly, if not wrongly, in letting matters go on for twelve months after she realised that she did not love the young man. I consider that is a most important point. I have great pleasure in awarding the prize to Lucy Langdon, and in praising most heartily the answers of Mrs. Fordham, Mrs. Nash, Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Sanders, Mrs. Bayley, Mrs. Pratt, Mrs. Reed, Mrs. Newland, and Mrs. May, also Miss Smith and Miss Toone. A splendid paper was written by "E. L. R.," but why did she not give me her name and address? She very nearly won the prize, and if she had, what could I have done with it?

The prize answer is as follows:—"I think it would be very wrong of 'ALICE' to marry the young man if she does not really love him. It will be very disappointing, no doubt, to tell him so; but she should write him a letter and tell him the position she is in, for I feel that if 'ALICE' does marry the young man, and there is no love attached to the marriage, it will not be a very happy one. But I do not think she should have waited a whole twelvemonths; she should have told him at the beginning that her love for him had grown less, and most certainly not have let him fix the date of the wedding."

* * * *

Try *Dalton's Advertiser*, "MARY," you can order it at any newspaper shop. You will, however, find it rather difficult to get unfurnished rooms with attendance. You should advertise in *Dalton's* for what you want, stating locality, number of rooms, and the rent you intend to pay.

* * * *

I think this is the recipe "ALICE" wants. It makes a capital pudding for children:—

Get one or two stale tea-cakes, according to the sized pudding you require. Cut them in thin slices and line a pudding basin carefully with them. Have ready some well-stewed, juicy fruit; pour some in very hot. Then put a layer of teacake. Repeat layers of fruit and cake till the basin is full, then cover all with a thick slice of cake. Put a saucer or plate over all, one which will sink into the basin with pressure, not rest on the top. Put something very heavy on the saucer, and put the whole away till the next day. Turn the pudding out, pour some custard over it, and serve cold.

* * * *

You are not the only person, "PERPLEXED ONE," who has found the giving of powders to children a difficult task. Let me tell you what I do. I ask the chemist to put them in *capsules*. They come home in the shape of little tubes, rounded at each end. The child puts one in his mouth for a second, then swallows some water. Water and capsule go down together, and we have no tears before or basins after the once dreaded powder. There is so much discomfort and unpleasantness which all must put up with in this world, that at the risk of being called "faddy" I think we ought to try to do away with all that is not absolutely incurable. It is your duty and mine too, to be as happy as we reasonably can, and to help everyone else to be the same. Let's try! Yours faithfully,

E. M. Waterworth

HINTS ON HOME DRESSMAKING.

BY A PRACTICAL DRESSMAKER.

THE cool evenings of this month lead us to turn our attention to out-door garments. The jacket of the hour is cut with tight-fitting backs, fronts curved in gracefully to the figure, and a very short, fluted basque, there being great similarity in shape, but a great difference in the minor details. Some are double-breasted, and these seem likely to predominate; while others are half-open in front, or turned back to show a waistcoat, generally of the same stuff. Collars still remain high, the roll collar being a great favourite for jackets, as well as for dresses; others, again, are trimmed with ruche, or plain or figured velvet or plush.

Fig. 31.

There is a decided change being effected in the style of dress sleeves, though somewhat gradually. In future most of them will be modelled on a tight-fitting or easy fitting coat-sleeve lining, draped on the shoulder in puffs, frills, or ruches; sometimes nothing more than a stiffened epaulette is used. Another new style of sleeve is cut coat-shaped above and below, and a puff of the same or contrasting material is let in at the back from the shoulder to the elbow, where it gradually becomes smaller.

The wide godet skirt is not nearly as fashionable as it was last season, many of the new skirts being gathered or pleated from the hips to the back, and not as extensive as formerly.

For millinery purposes flowers will continue to be largely used during the autumn; indeed, some of the headgear is like a flower garden in miniature, and the colouring is certainly very gaudy, though the variegated ribbons so much admired are really very beautiful. For those of quieter taste there will be seen hats and bonnets trimmed with foliage and ribbon only; the design and colouring of which are as natural and beautiful as that of the flowers. Lace is largely employed in making hats for the little ones, and nothing could be softer and prettier, with an introduction of baby ribbon.

For ordinary wear, coarse straws with three or four bands of very narrow velvet are as useful and stylish as anything we have seen.

Capes are mostly worn short, many scarcely reaching to the elbows; they are the very fullest shapes which have as yet been designed.

Fig. 31. We show here a dress suitable for a girl from ten to fifteen years of age. Dark brown habit cloth is used, the revers and box-pleat in front being covered with lace, or velvet can be substituted if preferred. The stuff is stretched plain over the back and side pieces, and the bodice is made to hook down the centre, the double box-pleat being laid on and hooked over down the side of the bodice. The revers must be interlined with canvas muslin. They are caught into the shoulder seam, and tacked down firmly on either side of the box-pleat in front. The gigot sleeve is used, and the neck is finished with a band of ribbon with loops at the side and back, the same being employed to edge the sleeve.

Fig. 32. The jacket here illustrated is one which will be found very useful at this season. It can be made in fine serge cloth, or in habit cloth, or of the same material as the dress, and should have a lining of Italian cloth or silk. The back fits tightly to the figure, and has an ample basque. The fronts are double-breasted, and are shaped to the figure without fitting tightly. The jacket can be worn open or closed. A square collar, which is used in place of revers, finishes the neck, and over this there is another collar of velvet or plush. The sleeve is not extravagantly large, although full enough to admit an ordinary dress sleeve, finished with a turned-back cuff.

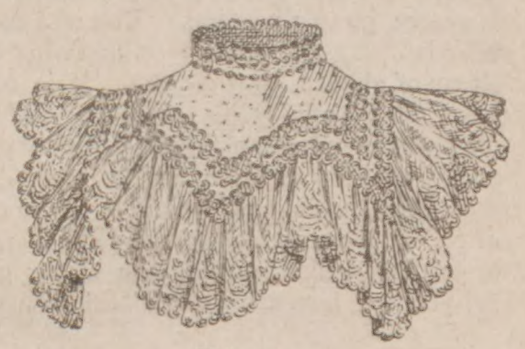


Fig. 33.

Fig. 33. The pattern shown here is suitable for making a detachable yoke collar, to be worn as trimming over a plain bodice. In this case it will be made of velvet, satin, or lace, to correspond with the other trimming of the dress, and the edge can be finished with lace or jet. Should it be required for a washing collar, the foundation can be made of muslin or lace, two rows of insertion being set on all round the edge, and below this a deep frill of lace. Coffee colour and white, or buttercup and white, are often blended with very good effect in making collars of this kind.

Fig. 32.

Flat patterns can be supplied. Figs. 31 and 32, 6½d. each; fig. 33, 4½d., post free. Address, "M.C. Pattern Department," 9, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.